

HorizonS
HorizonS

COMMUNICATION GUIDEBOOK

For Serving Diverse Communities
Outreach to the African-American Medicare Beneficiary





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HORIZONS

Health Outreach Information Zeroing in On Needs

Mission

To extend the reach of the *Medicare & You* education campaign to people with barriers to accessing information due to language, literacy, location, or culture.

Vision

All people with Medicare know and trust *Medicare & You* information and resources.

Information Needs

HORIZONS is an integrated and coordinated project, executed at both the national and local levels, for meeting the following information needs:

- **Recognition information:** Information that is *accurate, reliable, understandable, and relevant*, persistently presented to create sustained awareness of the availability of information and assistance.
- **Proactive information:** Information on topics about which CMS wants to increase beneficiary and public understanding.
- **Responsive information:** Information that responds to public interest or inquiry.
- **Crisis management information:** Information in response to unforeseen events.

Target Audience

People of African-American ethnicity and culture who are currently enrolled in Medicare, those who are aging into Medicare, their caregivers, and others who work on their behalf.

Supporting Research

The information and recommendations in this guidebook are based on analysis of U.S. Census data, available CMS data, and formative research conducted for the HORIZONS project, including the development and testing of product prototypes. The analysis and research were conducted during the period 1999-2002 by the Center for Beneficiary Choices in CMS, working with The Helix Group. Helix, based in Washington, DC, is a public health and social science research firm with extensive experience working with African-American communities.

The consumer testing and other formative research consisted of focus groups and interviews. Such qualitative research cannot be assumed to apply to the larger African-American senior population. However, the guidance presented in this document reflects those results that were supported by available quantitative research data or that were so consistent as to be likely to reflect the views of the larger group. We have taken some care to note when findings and recommendations are based primarily on qualitative data.

While this research focused on the African-American population age 65 and over, the recommendations may also prove helpful for communication with younger Medicare beneficiaries who have a disability.

What You Will Find in the Guidebook

African Americans represent a large and diverse segment of the growing over-65 population, a group with specialized healthcare information needs. *Outreach to the African-American Medicare Beneficiary* provides an overview of this elderly population including demographic characteristics, information preferences, and health disparities. It includes lessons learned from HORIZONS research and product and strategy development, along with examples and illustrations of best practices for communicating with this population.

Specifically, we provide tips for creating audiovisuals, radio and television broadcasts, brochures, displays and exhibits, print and outdoor advertising, as well as tips for conferences and special events. Drawing on our HORIZONS project work, we provide prototype Medicare informational materials for media channels including print, television, and radio. We include general communication principles and dissemination strategies, in addition to significant findings from research conducted for the HORIZONS project, demographic data, a list of key partnering organizations, and a bibliography for those interested in learning more about the African-American senior population.

This guidebook is intended to assist program planners, educators, and other healthcare professionals who need to deliver a message, create promotional materials, or plan an event that explains Medicare benefits and services to African-American seniors. It may serve as a teaching tool and as a useful, easy-to-follow reference. **This guidebook is designed as a one-stop information source for successful outreach to the elderly African-American Medicare population.**

Additional CMS Resources

CMS licenses a powerful marketing and planning tool called “Market Expert,” which aides in targeting specific populations. The tool can target populations by **demographic variables** (such as race, ethnicity, income, and age), **health status and access variables** (such as likelihood of having diabetes, high blood pressure, and eldercare decision making), **risk factor variables** (such as likelihood of getting a flu shot, smoking, and exercising regularly), **consumer lifestyle variables** (such as likelihood of owning a vehicle, insurance, and advertising preferences), or **media variables** (such as use of magazines, radio/TV/cable timeslots and formats, internet, and telecommunications).

Market Expert contains over 3,000 reportable variables. Many of the reports can be supported by thematic maps that show market sub-areas with the highest propensity to use various services, or the most likely return rate for a marketing campaign. Market Expert can be used to target populations at many geographic levels including county, zip code, or neighborhood.

The Market Expert tool is available as a free resource to CMS and its contractors for CMS related work. For more information, please contact Jodi Duckhorn at 410.786.1820 or JDuckhorn@cms.hhs.gov .



DESIGN GUIDELINES



Design Guidelines¹

Who is the target audience? Understanding the target audience – who they are, where they live, and the cultural and other factors that influence their behavior – is the first step in designing effective communication products. Specifically, for developing Medicare and other healthcare information, it is important to understand and appreciate beneficiaries' behaviors when seeking health information, and their levels of health literacy. An analysis of data from the 1998 Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey (MCBS) and a review of related literature (see Key Research Findings and Demographic Data Highlights) indicate that African-American seniors:

- Have a higher incidence of many preventable diseases and a lower life expectancy, compared to white seniors.
- Are unlikely to be aware of specific Medicare benefits and services, such as preventive services, savings programs, and the availability of health plan choices. Further, they often do not know about local Medicare resources such as the State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIP).
- May tend to distrust the medical profession in reaction to twentieth-century medical

Understanding the target audience – who they are, where they live, and the cultural and other factors that influence their behavior – is the first step in designing effective communication products.

1. When using this guidebook, CMS employees should also refer to agency guidelines, including clearance and budget requirements, for communication products and services. CBC employees should also refer to the CMS Communications Guide.

studies that violated ethical principles for research on human subjects. For example, the Tuskegee study withheld medical treatment, decades after it became available, from 400 low-income, African-American males infected with syphilis.

- Are more likely than many elderly population groups to have low literacy levels. People who cannot read and understand health information are less likely to practice healthy behaviors.
- Often rely on social and religious traditions. Almost 85 percent of African Americans described themselves as “fairly religious” or “very religious,” and prayer is among their most common coping responses. Another common coping strategy is seeking aid from significant others in the community, especially from family, friends, neighbors, volunteer associations, and religious leaders.
- Often make decisions in consultation with their adult children and other relatives. Family caregivers represent an important Medicare information intermediary and a key secondary audience, particularly for media-based messages. Approximately 16 percent of elderly African-American Medicare beneficiaries live with their adult children.

How do African-American seniors receive information? Assessing the target audience tells us what matters most to them. It lets us know how to get their attention and deliver our message through the media “clutter” that most Americans are faced with daily. Our research and experience with elderly African Americans in developing and testing products for the HORIZONS project provides the basis for the findings, strategies, and recommendations contained in this section. Our research involved focus groups and interviews with over 500 individuals in nine cities.

Information about education levels, learning styles, and media preferences helps in developing messages that resonate with the target audience. Audiences with low literacy levels, like many African-American seniors, generally spend more time viewing images and listening than they spend reading. Therefore, audiovisual media products, such as television commercials or public service announcements (PSAs)², may resonate better than print products with this audience.

This population also prefers images that convey positive messages and portray African-American seniors who are alert, thoughtful, and recognizable as the “everyday man or woman.” Elderly African Americans also prefer realistic images and content that speak directly to their life circumstances. While women make up the majority of African-American Medicare beneficiaries (1998 MCBS), they feel that men are too often excluded from public education campaigns.

2. The terms “public service announcement (PSA),” “commercial,” “advertisement,” “ad,” and “spot” may be used interchangeably throughout this document in referring to an information product developed for radio or television broadcast. The sections on Media Placement and Media Buying provide guidance on obtaining free and paid air time.

A. Print Products: Design, Layout, and Format

The initial appeal of a printed product is critical to attracting the viewer's attention and inspiring him or her to read and "reread" the text. Ask yourself. Is the product visually appealing? Is the message clear, simple, and direct, and are the photos and illustrations culturally appropriate?

The most important rule in designing a print product is to keep the message short, simple, and to the point. Following are other points to consider:

- Portray people with whom African-American seniors identify, e.g., grocery clerks, letter carriers, religious leaders, bus drivers, pharmacy staff, or nurses.
- Incorporate themes from daily life. For example, focus testing of magazine concepts for publicizing the Medicare Savings Programs indicated African-American senior women liked the coupon-cutting theme because they were familiar with it. They also responded well to the scenes of husband-and-wife interactions.
- For advertisements in magazines and newspapers, as well as on billboards, posters, and Internet sites, combine words and graphics that will be attention-getting, entertaining, and persuasive.
- Take advantage of publications, such as newsletters, to convey more than basic information. For example, the HORIZONS team developed a prototype newsletter that included human-interest stories about the experiences of an everyday couple, to illustrate the benefits and costs of health maintenance organizations.

...keep the message short, simple, and to the point.

*African-American
seniors need to see their
own images represented
in order to recognize
that a product is meant
for them.*

The next step is to determine design, layout, and format.³ It takes training and skill to design an attractive print product that will catch the audience's attention; you may need more help than the word processing and design programs on your computer to produce a quality product. If funding is available, hire professional assistance.⁴ Refer to the information provided in this guidebook to help ensure that the product is culturally appropriate.

To illustrate the development of print products that appeal to the African-American elderly population, we have selected the "Medicare Preventive Services" brochure (see HORIZONS Prototypes) to use as an example throughout the rest of this section. This brochure shows an attractive elderly couple on the cover, so seniors know it's for *them*. Throughout the brochure, each preventive service is represented by an African-American man, woman, or couple. The brochure's introductory page highlights a few of the health disparities for African-American seniors, along with corresponding Medicare preventive services that can improve health outcomes. The publication is clearly written using text from an existing Medicare publication in a basic question-and-answer format to describe the preventive service tests available and their respective costs.

1. Photos

African-American seniors need to see their own images represented in order to recognize that a product is meant for them. Mainstream healthcare and other material will often show a racially or ethnically-mixed group. However, to many African Americans, these representations still seem to be aimed at the majority population. In essence, African Americans need to see themselves as the centerpiece of the image, rather than in the background. Focus testing of the "Medicare Preventive Services" brochure indicated that this population prefers photographs

3. CMS staff should research if there is an existing product on their topic that may be used or modified.

4. CMS graphics professionals are available for assisting CMS staff.

that “look like us ... and look happy, healthy, and positive.”

Check with your organization to identify photos that resonate with African-American audiences.⁵ You may also search stock photo companies on the Internet and purchase royalty-free photos. However, because royalty-free photos are inexpensive, many people use them, so it is common to come across the same photo in other print products.

Graphics – illustrations, drawings, or icons – also can be used. For example, a telephone icon can be used to illustrate making a phone call. Make sure the photos or other images reinforce the message and subject matter.

2. Color

The use of color is extremely important when addressing all elderly populations, as color catches the eye and attracts the attention of those with declining vision. Print materials often are produced in two colors because of cost considerations. Text in black on a light background, with another color for accent, is the most common and is preferred by seniors because the contrast makes it easier to read. In focus testing, African-American Medicare beneficiaries preferred printed materials that are colorful, e.g., red and blue. They liked the green color used for the “Medicare Preventive Services” brochure because it is “calming, pleasant, soft, restful, and peaceful.” In focus testing another product, the Glaucoma/Information Channel poster (see HORIZONS Prototypes), participants preferred the two-color version of the poster to the black and white version. The purple color used in the two-color version appealed to this population.

3. Typestyle, Size of Print, and Format

For blocks of text, select a typestyle that is easy to read, such as “Times” or “Garamond,”

*...African-American
Medicare beneficiaries
preferred printed materials
that are colorful...*

5. For CMS staff, there are specific ways to purchase images so that CMS may continue to use them.

Include simple definitions of any necessary medical terms; avoid medical jargon and acronyms.

which are both serif typefaces. **This sentence is shown in a serif font.** In contrast, **this text uses a sans serif font** (i.e., without serifs). Note that the serif font has lines on each letter that guide the eye to the next letter, while the sans serif font is plainer but can be harder to read when used as a block of text. It is preferable to use no more than two typefaces in one document – one for body copy, and one for headlines and titles to show contrast.

Font size is important when dealing with seniors, and should be large enough for the audience to read easily; **CMS recommends 14-point type.** In focus testing printed prototypes, participants said they liked the large print and spacing between the words because it was easy to read. In formatting the document, align the copy on the left and set it “ragged right” (leaving copy uneven at the right margin). Copy that is justified so that it fits evenly in each line of text, often referred to as “fully justified,” can be difficult to read. For this audience, materials that give costs or other financial information should highlight the money amounts by using a bulleted format and bold type.

4. Text

One focus of the HORIZONS project is to target those African-American beneficiaries who experience the greatest barriers to accessing health care. Therefore, Medicare materials designed for this audience should be in **simple and basic English.** Sentences should be short and, following the rules for newspaper articles, should answer the questions “who, what, why, when, where, and how” early in the document. Messages that target African-American beneficiaries should always be **non-threatening and respectful.**

It is important to remember the educational level of the target audience. Include simple definitions of any necessary medical terms; avoid medical jargon and acronyms. Focus group

participants who tested the “Medicare Preventive Services” brochure and other printed products (see HORIZONS Prototypes) indicated they liked the fact that the words are simple and the text is large, making it easy on the eyes.

5. Layout, Design, and Print

Effective print products are designed using white space, headings, boxes, and graphics to convey and reinforce the message in a way that is easy for readers to follow. Make a sketch of your vision for the layout and design of the product you are developing, as a guide for the designer, copywriter, or printer. A pencil-and-paper image can go a long way in sharing your vision of how the printed piece should look. If you are using a designer to produce your product, the designer will provide electronic/press-ready artwork for the printer. If you supply the photos, illustrations, and copy, a quality printer can make the artwork for you for a fee.

Focus-test participants liked the format of the “Medicare Preventive Services” brochure. Each page was dedicated to one Medicare preventive service and tabbed for easy reference. The participants also liked the question-and-answer format used to present the information. All of the participants said the brochure offered useful information and indicated they were motivated to obtain more information about Medicare preventive services. Additionally, participants said they liked the last page of the brochure because it provides a chart for keeping track of the dates they obtained specific preventive services.

B. Radio and Television Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Many of the principles for developing print products apply to radio and television messages as well. Moreover, **print, radio, and television products can be developed using the same message and similar themes and slogans, in an integrated campaign.** This method is cost-effective, as one written message with a few editorial adjustments can serve in multiple mediums. For example, the Medicare Savings Program script serves as both a television and radio PSA with minor revisions. (See HORIZONS Prototypes.)

While PSAs need to be short – 30 to 60 seconds in length – they can convey valuable healthcare information. A radio PSA typically is in a 60-second format, while a television PSA usually is 30 seconds long. Remember to leave a few seconds before and after speaking; e.g., for a 30-second ad, the copy should time to 27 to 28 seconds.

Radio PSAs can be written for both local and national outlets and are highly effective tools for getting your message out. They are perhaps the least expensive communication products to develop and produce. For many older African Americans, **radio is a source of companionship and advice**, as well as a medium for discussing problems, i.e., call-in shows. In areas with sizable African-American populations, radio spots during commercial breaks in popular programs reach a relatively loyal daytime audience and can be especially effective. Products for radio possess a further advantage: since radio listening is the least demanding form of mass communication, many listeners keep it on all the time, increasing the likelihood that they will hear your message. In the “talk radio”

Gospel music stations are strongly preferred by the elderly African-American beneficiary audience...

format, listeners interact with the show host and a guest by calling in; this aspect appeals to African-American seniors. Gospel music stations are strongly preferred by the elderly African-American beneficiary audience, particularly local stations.

To tap into this audience, plan media placement of the major Medicare messages in local radio markets. **The PSA must attract and keep attention instantly, and it must contain information that is easy to remember.** Radio is best for “call to action” messages where the listener is advised to “Call now!” or “Call today!” Repeat the “story line” as often as possible, particularly as the date of a promoted event approaches. The listener is more likely to respond when a theme or telephone number is repeated. For example:

In the New Orleans area, a radio ad was used to promote the African-American Senior Health Fair, an event planned as the culmination of the year 2000 HORIZONS Medicare Health Plan choices campaign pilot. By featuring a father and daughter, the ad appealed to both the primary (senior) and the secondary (family caregiver) audiences. The father is despondent on turning sixty-five; facing retirement, he is worried about health care. But his daughter, repeating the theme of the campaign, assures him, “You Have a Choice!” The double reference is a clue to both a choice of health plans and a choice to attend the fair, where he will receive information on various health plans in the targeted brochure, “Choosing the Medicare Plan that’s Right for You.” The colloquial language, inflection in the daughter’s voice, and familiar story theme all helped connect with the intended audience. According to the feedback provided by attendees at the fair, this radio ad had persuaded a number of them to attend the event. The ad relied on everyday interactions between family members to dispense useful health information.

Another radio PSA on preventive services also uses a family setting to get the audience’s attention. In this one, a grandmother is picking up her young

grandson after school. Newly retired, she tells him playfully that now she will be able to pick him up after school every day. She also tells him that to be able to do this, she must remain healthy, and she plans on doing that with regular medical tests included in Medicare preventive services. The PSA conveys the positive messages that: 1) life has plenty to offer the elderly if they take care of their health, and 2) regular use of Medicare preventive services will help them take care of their health. (See Illustration 1, “Radio Public Service Announcement – Preventive Services.”)

Radio Public Service Announcement - Preventive Services (60 sec.)

Background noises: Children running and laughing; cars/school bus driving by; birds chirping or dog barking.

Grandson: Hi, grandma! I love it when you pick me up after school!

Grandma: I do too, sweetie! And now that I’m retired, I can do it every day.

Grandson: That’s GREAT. (slight pause) Uh, grandma, what’s retired mean?

Grandma: I don’t have to work as hard as I used to. Now I can do more of what I want to each day...like seeing my favorite grandson. But I’ll have to take care of myself and stay healthy to keep up with you! (teasingly)

Grandson: How will you do that? (slight pause obviously thinking) I know, you can come to soccer practice with me.

Grandma: (laughing) I’m a bit too old for your team Kevin. But I’ll walk as much as I can – that’s good exercise, too. And Medicare is helping me take good care of my health; they have a program called preventive services. That means the doctors can find out if something is wrong even before I get sick.

Grandson: Will Medicare keep you alive forever, Grandma?

Grandma: Nobody lives forever, baby, but with regular tests and God’s love, I can pick you up every day until you finish school.

Grandson: What! Even when I’m in college?

(Laughter from both....fade)

Tag line: “To find out more about Medicare Preventive Health Services
Call 1-800-MEDICARE that’s 1-800-633-4227.”

Illustration 1

Television PSAs – Older African Americans are television viewers. However, half of the African-American Medicare beneficiaries in the 1998 MCBS said they received little health information from television. Most Medicare PSAs on television are focused on the general over-65 market and not specifically focused on African Americans. HORIZONS research indicated the effectiveness of using targeted broadcast media approaches for the African-American elderly population. Television is such a strong

...it is critical to develop television commercials that air at the times African-American seniors are watching, using images that are culturally relevant.

communication medium that creating health communication products specifically for this medium is of vital importance. To effectively reach the elderly African-American population, it is critical to develop television commercials that air at the times African-American seniors are watching, using images that are culturally relevant.

Elderly African Americans tend to be voracious absorbers of news; they watch early morning, midday, early evening, and late night television news programming. A popular form of relaxation is viewing afternoon soap operas, game shows, and long-running series. Television PSAs can reach audiences when they are relaxed and comfortable, and can use humor or wit to attract attention.

1. Scriptwriting

A simple, direct approach works best when writing a script. **The script copy must follow the main theme of the PSA while being colloquial, entertaining, and easily understood;** the sole purpose of the script is to promote a particular Medicare or other healthcare service or resource. Production companies can be hired to produce a script and create scenes to convey your message in video format. (See section on Educational Videos.) Before hiring a production company, you may want to write a draft copy in words that you know will explain Medicare in the best way. Very often the production company you choose will recommend changes to your script.

Some scripts contain very little dialogue. A creative choice is to use visuals to the full extent, allowing the pictures to tell the story. (Illustration 2 gives an example of an effective PSA script.)

DIABETES 30 Sec TV AD

“God Works in Mysterious Ways”

Opening Scene: A church service is in session. We see bright sunlight – it is a warm day. Focus briefly on an older African-American female in a pew. She is fanning herself with a church fan as she listens to the preacher.

Preacher: “As we go to prayer, let’s remember sister Willa and brother Mitchell who are both in the hospital due to complications from diabetes. They’ve been on our prayer list for a while now. But remember Church, have faith because God works in mysterious ways.”

Someone in Audience: (While preacher is speaking.) “Well...”

Cut Away Shot: When the preacher says “But remember,” the camera cuts away to the woman we saw briefly in the beginning who is fanning. As we refocus on her, she is nodding in agreement with the preacher’s words. As she nods, her eye catches what the fan says. It is an ad for Medicare Preventive Services for those with diabetes. She begins to read (the camera focuses on the fan), and we see a look of dawning comprehension on her face. She then raises her eyes heavenward and whispers “amen.”

Woman Fanning: “Amen.”

We see a slight knowing smile on her face as we fade up to the voice over.

Voice Over: “One in every four African Americans over 65 has diabetes.
Call 1-800-MEDICARE 1-800-633-4227, to see how we can help you manage your diabetes. Medicare. Helping you help yourself.”

Super: 1-800-MEDICARE

1-800-633-4227

Helping you help yourself.

Illustration 2

...you can give the message more impact by using local talent, spokespersons, or a trusted radio announcer.

2. Vocals and Talent

After your script is written, you will choose actors to convey your message. If you are creating a PSA recorded or produced for radio or television, you can give the message more impact by using local talent, spokespersons, or a trusted radio announcer. However, finding and engaging the appropriate person can be the most difficult aspect of the production process. If the ad is a simple story relying on everyday scenes, the production company will have a list of talent agencies and a wide range of actors from which to choose.

A casting agency can identify the appropriate talent for your project. After the agency holds an initial casting call, you will receive audition tapes (videos) of the talent pool. Alternatively, you may choose to be present during auditions and make your choice immediately. Plan to spend time selecting talent; it is not an easy task. The actor or actors you choose will make an impact on your audience. In most cases, additional casting calls are necessary to narrow the prospective talent pool down to your final selections. For Medicare targeted materials, look for persons who are representative of and who will appeal to the audience you are targeting.

The production company and the actors know the various, sometimes complicated rules governing **talent, agents, and union fees**. For example, special considerations apply when a shot taken from a PSA is used on a billboard, in magazines and newspapers, or in a Medicare brochure. A competent agent will advise you of all present and future payments; this discussion is an essential part of the production process.

- *Talent fees* involve not only the actor's fee, but also his or her agent's fees.

- *Union fees* may apply and will depend on the actor's particular union membership and how long he or she has held it.
- *Release fees* also are part of the package, because federal agencies usually want to own an image indefinitely and be able to use it in a number of ways.

3. Using Celebrity Spokespersons

There is no doubt that when a “star” or other well-known person talks about a product, people will take notice. Using a famous doctor or other healthcare provider to talk about Medicare benefits and services can be especially effective in reaching African-American seniors. However, be aware that using a celebrity also involves certain risks. A strong personality could overwhelm the message, or the person may decline in popularity or become newsworthy in some way that undermines the message.

If you are interested in using a celebrity, first check with the public or community relations office in your organization to find out if you are permitted to do so.⁶ You must **start recruitment early**. Be well prepared with all significant details, and assure the person's agent that you know your subject inside out and that you can provide any necessary briefing. It will be up to you to convince the celebrity that the advertised subject enhances his or her career aims and image. Do not waste time chasing unlikely choices; a person who publicly states his or her age as in the “late forties” is unlikely to agree to promote Medicare services and benefits aimed at seniors 65 years and older. Likewise, you should do enough research to be certain the person's image will reinforce your message.

*...be certain the person's
image will reinforce
your message.*

6. CMS employees are advised to coordinate media contacts with the Public Affairs Office, and must complete the necessary clearance process.

Outdoor ads, such as public transit advertising and billboards, get great exposure and build image and credibility.

C. Outdoor Media

Once your message on Medicare services is clearly written, there is a range of media you can use for promoting it. Any media product, whether print, radio, or television, usually can be adapted for a church bulletin or flier, for public transit advertising, or for a poster or billboard.

Outdoor ads, such as public transit advertising and billboards, get great exposure and build image and credibility. Before designing the media product, call the billboard, bus, subway, or train companies in the target area and ask what locations and routes are available for advertising. Spaces are often booked quickly, so contact the company well in advance. Also find out the size of the available space. Doing this early will avoid additional costs for resizing the design. Plan to produce an additional quantity of the item, approximately 10 percent, to allow for possible damage during installation and the need to periodically repost the product.

Public transit advertising provides the opportunity to advertise and promote a message frequently in a short period of time. Your message may appear on a billboard-style poster on the sides or rear of the vehicle, on smaller posters inside the vehicle, or on kiosks located in stations and depots. Buses tend to travel the same route every day, so repetition of the message is almost guaranteed.

To ensure the message reaches the African-American elderly population, ask the transit company for demographic information such as the age of the riders, the routes recommended to guarantee the audience sees the advertising, and an estimate of the number of times the audience will see the product. By choosing specific routes, you will be able to direct information to the communities you want to serve. For example, during the HORIZONS New Orleans pilot campaign in 2000, ads were placed inside buses on routes regularly used by African-American seniors. These ads promoted an upcoming health fair and featured the cover of the

brochure, “Choosing the Medicare Plan that’s Right for You.”

When creating any form of outdoor media, keep in mind these tips for design:

- **Limit the message to six words;** any more take too long to read.
- Keep the concept simple.
- Be sure the type is large, clear, and easy to read.
- Use one large graphic to grab the viewer’s attention.
- Make sure the board or poster is illuminated if it receives a lot of drive-by traffic, and that subway posters are located in a high-traffic area.

D. Educational Videos

An educational video is used when a longer message is needed and typically is not watched casually or accidentally. Seniors often view them in a doctor’s office, hospital waiting area, or senior center. They may also be included in a health information session or seminar organized by a community-based organization (CBO), church, or healthcare provider organization.

Compared to radio and television PSAs, educational videos need to hold the viewer’s attention for a longer period of time – usually 5 or 10 minutes – so they need to be both informative and entertaining. These audiovisual products usually rely on filmed or taped dramatic scenes that convey a message. It is important to keep the message and dialogue simple. To produce them, we advise hiring a video production company to develop the concept, write the script, and hire the actors. In all cases, your organization remains ultimately accountable for the end product and must **oversee the production process closely to be sure it communicates accurate information and sends the right message.** Following is an example of an educational video and a sample concept:

An educational video is used when a longer message is needed...

...seniors who live with younger relatives may benefit from Medicare information publicized on the Internet.

An educational video with accompanying PSAs was developed for the Medicare Savings Programs Outreach Kit. (See HORIZONS Prototypes.) The video has visual interest and appeal, and educates the viewer through a scenario focused on people's daily routines. This video was used to explain Medicare details and where to get additional information. As is usual with educational videos, the end portion was devoted to an information-giving segment that explained how to find out if a beneficiary qualified for any of the available programs. Focus-test participants indicated that they related to the couple presented in the video because they were "just like regular people" who were believable and family-oriented.

A sample concept was developed to explain "Medicare + Choice" to African-American seniors and to promote the SHIP and its role as a front-line supplier of health insurance information. The camera follows an elderly woman and her daughter through a maze of health insurance information as they search for assistance. The woman is about to become 65 years old, and her long-time doctor is retiring. She and her daughter are advised to visit the local SHIP office, where sessions are held to explain Medicare + Choice. There, they meet people representing three Medicare + Choice plans. This video style generally appeals to seniors and their caregivers, who often are the seniors' adult children. A middle-aged viewer seeing this video alone would receive information that he or she could pass on to an elderly relative. Focus-test participants received this concept enthusiastically.

E. Internet Usage

Little information exists about elderly African Americans and computer usage. However, seniors who live with younger relatives may benefit from Medicare information publicized on the Internet. There are many health-related web sites in addition to <http://www.medicare.gov>, some of which focus entirely on the needs of the elderly.

- <http://www.ncba-aged.org> The National Caucus and Center on Black Aged sponsors this web site that includes information on health and housing.
- <http://www.omhrc.gov/> The Office of Minority Health publishes information on this web site.
- <http://www.bhip.net/home.html> One of the fastest growing health referral services for African Americans.

F. Summary

Keep in mind these important guidelines when preparing Medicare communications products for African-American seniors:

- Do the research to know the audience, what their preferences are, how they best receive information, and which communication channels are most effective for telling them about your products and services.
- Design materials that speak directly to the audience, get their attention, and urge them to take action.
- Use a script that is colloquial, entertaining, and easily understood, while focusing on the main theme of the ad or PSA.
- For print products, use bullets to set off important facts and a font of at least 14 points.



DISSEMINATION STRATEGIES



Dissemination Strategies

We have discussed some important guidelines for designing effective Medicare information products for African-American seniors. It is equally important to select the best channels for delivering these messages – and to work effectively through each channel to maximize message distribution.

Assessing Channels of Distribution

The success of a product or service often depends on how it is delivered and how the audience perceives it. Working directly with African-American Medicare beneficiaries throughout the research and creative phases of the HORIZONS project helped us ensure that our messages and materials are perceived as culturally sensitive and appropriate. We also identified effective communication channels for delivering health-care information.

As noted earlier, it is important to assess your target audience by conducting research on lifestyles, media preferences, geographic locations, and income and education levels. Review this data to identify which African-American seniors have the greatest barriers to accessing Medicare information. Also determine which methods you should choose to get Medicare information to them.

A. Media Placement⁷

Obtaining advertising, whether television, radio, or print, is easy if you can pay for it. However, if your budget is limited, free advertising, while more difficult, can be done if you can “sell” your product to interested news outlets.

Aim for legitimate news coverage. This may mean getting a reporter out to interview the most senior official present at the event for placement in a health column or on an age-targeted page or television news segment. For example, free news coverage of the 2000 HORIZONS New Orleans pilot campaign was achieved through skillful planning.

7. CMS employees are advised to coordinate media contacts with the Public Affairs Office, and must complete the necessary clearance procedures.

The promoters wanted the local news media to be aware of the upcoming Health Fair and launch of the brochure “Choosing the Medicare Plan That’s Right for You.” Several weeks before the event, the assignment editor at News Channel 6 (a local NBC affiliate) was called and told about the Health Fair and its significance for African Americans. On the day of the event, the station sent a reporter and cameraman, and the event received a feature-length story on the early evening and late night newscasts.

Another approach is to **ask for free placement**. The media are required by the licensing agreement with the Federal Communications Commission to give back to the community and are likely to be interested in producing your healthcare message as a public service. However, there is no guarantee that the message will be placed during the times viewers in your target audience will be watching. Call broadcast stations and newspapers and **ask for the public information officer (PIO)** to get PSAs placed at no cost. You may need to be persistent in trying to reach this individual. Many of CMS’s regional offices are working with media outlets in their respective areas and can refer you to their contacts.

B. Media Buying

If your budget permits, consider paying for ad space or broadcast time to help ensure that your message will reach the target audience. Knowing the audience, particularly the publications they read and radio and television programs they enjoy, will help you negotiate effectively. African-American seniors watch television mostly in the late afternoons and evenings, and they watch the news, gospel programs, court television, and game shows. They read *Modern Maturity* and Christian magazines such as *The Daily Bread*. Some read *Ebony* and *Jet*, and they are likely to read the health sections first. Many African-American Medicare beneficiaries read a local newspaper and tend to read the front page and the obituary sections first. See the Key Research Findings section of this guidebook for additional information about the media habits of this population.

If your budget is limited, **buy media that will have the greatest impact on the audience for the least cost**. Media prices are often inflated, so be sure to ask for the lowest price. Call the representatives at the media outlets that reach the target audience to tell them about the commercials or print ads you want to place and how much time or space you need. If you explain that the ads were created as PSAs and that you have a small budget, they will contact the PIO and help you negotiate lower rates or a free media schedule along with a paid schedule.

C. Broadcast Media

Local television stations have a cadre of faithful viewers, many of whom are elderly, and television producers and editors love health-related stories. Persuade the editors that you have an attractive product to promote, one with solid news value, and make it clear that you know your facts. For example, Medicare Nutrition Therapy, a new Medicare preventive service, is a good example of a newsworthy subject. Since it is a new Medicare benefit, it is news that producers will want to explain to the public. This message also can be used as a launching pad for discussing other Medicare preventive services and the roles they can play in prolonging good health among African-American seniors.

Local radio call-in shows are also good channels for promotion. The producers of many talk or call-in shows deliberately seek out the controversial topics, and Medicare issues seldom fall into that category. However, some local radio programs are devoted to dispensing reliable healthcare information to their listeners. Work with these hosts to cover Medicare topics, focusing on stations with sizable African-American audiences.

D. Print Media

You may be able to get coverage in newspapers and magazines through the editorial desk by submitting an article written and signed by a Medicare official. The article will most likely fall in the category of a “white paper,” which is an official opinion of a service or product. It is important to follow up with a call to each of the places to which you sent the information.

Be vigilant about scanning for news stories or survey research results possibly coinciding with a product launch – for example, promoting Medicare Savings Programs at the same time a study shows that African Americans underutilize these programs. This is a good time to call health editors and promote your product.

Local television stations have a cadre of faithful viewers, many of whom are elderly, and television producers and editors love health-related stories.

You may also call a health editor to suggest feature articles about people who have stories to tell about Medicare-related issues. You will get a much more positive response if you can convince news people that you **have the salient facts at your fingertips** and that your story is strong and reliable, and has a fresh angle.

Once you have made good contacts, it is important to maintain those relationships and keep those contacts working for you. When your story gets into the newspaper or on the radio, call your contact to thank him or her. Share any feedback or results you have received from the airing of your story. Write the person a short note on your organization's official stationery to acknowledge his or her contribution to your successful effort.

E. Public Events and Exhibits

Community programs can provide valuable resources when you need a channel for disseminating information without breaking your budget. Considering the needs and preferences of the target population, identify suitable events and locations, given the time and available resources. For example, shopping malls frequented by seniors and their families are especially suitable for publicizing events, distributing materials, and answering questions. Other examples of such programs, discussed below, include health and nutrition booths or seminars, a speaker's series, health fairs, and conferences.

Traveling Health Booth

You can design a mobile booth to draw the attention of passersby. The booth should offer basic Medicare information and handouts for seniors to take home, and can be set up in shopping malls, meeting rooms of public housing facilities, senior centers, local health clinics, and churches. For example, a large number of seniors visited a Medicare booth that was set up at a large shopping mall in New Orleans to publicize the health-care message "you have a choice" of healthcare plans, as part of the 2000 African-American Senior Health Fair.

Health and Nutrition Seminars

These informational talks, which may include visuals, a brief video, or charts, are designed to focus on healthy living and nutrition planning. A health expert such as a physician, nurse practitioner, nutritionist, or physical therapist may be the main speaker. These seminars are good channels for distributing Medicare information. It might be particularly valuable to have a SHIP representative or other Medicare expert available at these seminars to help answer questions. For example, health and nutrition seminars were held at two major churches in New York City in connection with testing Medicare + Choice brochures developed for the HORIZONS project. Local physicians, geriatric healthcare professionals, dietitians, and chefs led the health and nutrition seminars, and a SHIP representative was present to help answer Medicare questions.

Speaker's Series

A planned series of talks, accompanied by slides, a brief videotape and/or charts, is an excellent tool for reaching the community with a healthcare message. Create your own speaker's bureau by training your staff to effectively present information on Medicare benefits and services. Prepare for possible questions from the audience by developing a comprehensive list of anticipated questions and the corresponding answers. Go out to places where seniors congregate, which may include neighborhood churches, housing facilities, and community or senior centers.

Health Fairs

Health fairs present opportunities to distribute printed materials about your products and services in a relaxed and entertaining setting. They offer excellent venues for the mobile display booth described earlier. Including health screening at a mobile booth will draw seniors to the site. Additional offerings could include healthful cooking by a local chef, or exercise and stretching demonstrations by a certified physical therapist or yoga instructor.

Conferences

One more setting to explore as a distribution channel for your materials is conferences. **Select the ones with themes analogous to your goals.** Contact the organizers to get permission to place your materials on the display tables; the mobile booth works well at these sites. Often hundreds of attendees at local conferences will pick up your materials and carry them back to their organizations. For example, research reports and other products were distributed during the 2001 conference held by the National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, to publicize the HORIZONS project.

Health fairs present opportunities to distribute printed materials about your products and services in a relaxed and entertaining setting.

F. Finding Community Partners

The importance of involving community partners in the design and implementation of outreach projects serving African Americans cannot be over-emphasized. Early in the project, the HORIZONS team brought in churches that became very important partners in pilot outreach efforts once they were informed of the potential benefits to their members.

You will want to collaborate with a number of community groups and organizations because of their knowledge of the community and their links to the people who need your information. As discussed below, partnerships can be formed with community-based organizations, faith-based groups, civic organizations, service organizations, and colleges and universities. (See Key Organizations.)

Community-based organizations typically are incorporated, tax-exempt entities that deliver a range of economic and social services within a specified, local area. They generally help seniors at little or no cost and may have outlets through which to promote the benefits of Medicare services. Senior centers are part of this network and offer the advantage of regular access to beneficiaries on an ongoing basis.

Churches and other faith-based groups play a major role in getting health information to their constituencies. The church leaders are usually well connected to the community and tend to be particularly willing to advertise materials that relate to the health of seniors.

Civic organizations such as sororities, fraternities, Masonic lodges, and associations are often the bulwark of the senior communities in which they function. These groups are likely to have historical and social knowledge that will be useful as you design your promotion for their localities.

Service organizations include the American Red Cross, the United Way, the American Cancer Society, and other national and international organizations. These large, national entities develop strong relationships with local agencies and associations. Many seniors have affiliations with service organizations and may be part of the extensive volunteer networks sponsored by these groups.

The print and broadcast media outlets of colleges and universities should not be overlooked. Not only are these communication channels free or almost free, but they are also well-connected to the community, relatively well-funded, and tend to be some of the largest employers in a local community.

G. Stakeholder Organizations

Stakeholder organizations comprise individuals and groups that generally are **financially and emotionally invested in their communities**. Key organizations of African Americans are similar between localities, as they are chapters or districts of national organizations. Some of these groups are:

- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) – particularly those that are part of the HBCU health network,

- Professional associations of accountants, nurses, doctors, and lawyers,
- Government agency organizations of African-American employees,
- Civil rights groups, such as the National Urban League, and
- Groups with an interest in a specific disease, such as the Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation

These stakeholder groups have a strong commitment to the physical health of citizens, especially African-American seniors. Their networks are often good conduits for distributing materials, and many times their members are willing to partner in events such as health seminars and fairs.

While not a stakeholder, per se, SHIP representatives usually are the local Medicare experts for the region in which they are working. As such, they know the specific benefits and options available to beneficiaries and healthcare providers and how payments are made, and can be invaluable in providing assistance to your target population. The SHIPs also have established relationships with CMS Regional Offices, local health departments, civic groups, and colleges.

H. Obstacles

Dealing with the media may be quite challenging. Identified below are a few strategies to assist you with common challenges you might experience in obtaining media placement:

- **Last minute media calls:** Be prepared for last minute calls from the local media representative by keeping an inventory of material in various formats on hand. Media representatives could call with free ad space or airtime, or a steep discount. If caught in a crunch, ask the media outlet to help you.

*...SHIP representatives
usually are the local
Medicare experts...*

*Evaluation is a process
to identify what worked,
what did not work,
and why.*

- **The local media publication information officer won't return calls:** Keep calling and leave messages, or call the station manager and ask how to get a PSA placed. Find out if others in your organization have a good contact and use it.
- **Partnership problems:** If a potential partner that provides healthcare services to African-American seniors in a region you need to reach hesitates to give you access to its clientele, talk to the executive director. Explain your mission and message, and provide samples of materials. Offer non-disruptive solutions to reaching the partner's clientele, such as leaving materials accessible to those who visit the center. Explore partnering possibilities and brainstorm with the executive director or person in charge. There may be opportunities for expanded outreach, such as sponsoring their annual health fair or outreach project.

I. Evaluating the Communication Effort

It is important to establish a process for assessing the effectiveness of your communication effort. For example, you would want to know whether a brochure or a three-line item in the back of the newspaper is more effective for sharing a Medicare message. Or you may want to know the effectiveness of a billboard advertisement placed in a neighborhood with few senior citizens but many caregivers. Evaluation is a process to identify what worked, what did not work, and why. With all the activities involved in getting the materials just right, it is all too easy to forget to build in feedback mechanisms. Here are some simple but effective tools for assessing your outreach efforts:

- Prior to conducting outreach, **share your plans with community partners and stakeholders**, and solicit their input. They may have suggestions for implementing the

activities or about the success of similar programs in their area. Ask about any local events or celebrations that may affect – positively or negatively – the success of your program. While getting feedback, ask if they will help with, participate in, and attend your event.

- **Face-to-face interviews** often are useful because retired seniors tend to be sociable. Set up a display at a supermarket or shopping mall and ask seniors if they have seen your advertisement or promotion or if they plan to attend the upcoming health fair or seminar. You also can get feedback about the services and benefits you are promoting: Have they read the material? Did they visit the health fair? What did they like or dislike about the television commercial? What do they remember about it? What is the main message of the product (television or radio PSA, brochure, etc.)?
- **Contact organizations impacted by the campaign.** Check with service providers to see if seniors are using the services mentioned in your recent promotion. Are people using the services more often, asking better questions of providers, or seeking help from a range of different providers?
- **Built-in evaluations**, such as *couponing*, provide a relatively easy source of hard data on who is paying attention to your advertisement. Include a tear-away coupon that can be redeemed at a local merchant (for example, a free bottle of water from a grocer) at the bottom of the advertisement. Grocers (or other local merchants) often are willing to underwrite products, like the bottle of water, to get seniors to shop with them. This method of evaluation requires developing a relationship with a community *stakeholder*, in this case, a grocer you can check with on the coupon redemptions. Large grocers often will help underwrite the advertising costs.
- Finally, it is important to **monitor media coverage** of the event; keep a clipping book for future reference.

J. Conclusion

Following all the major steps described earlier should help to minimize any difficulties in disseminating your materials to African-American seniors. **Do not forget to build a contact list.** It is the all-important building block for your current and future promotion campaigns. Keep it accurate and up-to-date, comprehensive, but easy to use. Your list might include the following sources:

- Wire services – check the Associated Press and United Press International for their targeted, national segments
- Daily newspapers
- Health and nutrition publications, such as *Health Quest* magazine
- Health insurance industry publications
- Business publications targeted to senior investors, such as *Black Enterprise*

- General interest magazines, such as *Jet* and *Ebony*
- News syndicates and syndicated columnists (those who write health articles that appear in several newspapers nationwide)
- Television and cable
- Radio
- Specialized web sites, such as <http://www.ncba-aged.org> (The National Caucus and Center on Black Aged)
- Special interest mailings (your own list)
- Other media

Reminders and Special Considerations

- Promote the campaign or outreach event through major local media outlets, and at the same time distribute promotional materials to community partners, organizations, and stakeholders. An integrated effort is the key to success.
- Engage community partners in local dissemination efforts; they have face recognition and credibility with many seniors who know them in the community.
- Remember that churches and other faith-based groups can play a major role in getting health information to their constituencies.
- Identify transportation barriers and options for participants and help to alleviate them. Remember the population is likely to be aged or frail and possibly disabled. Special transportation provisions may be needed. Make sure that the staff is briefed on what to do in the event of an emergency.
- Contact community organizations to garner interest and obtain an estimate of the number of people who are likely to attend your event. Be sure to have enough copies of any informational materials you will be distributing.
- Identify key players and staff who will be on hand for the event. Develop a protocol for working with these individuals to implement the event.



RESEARCH

Research

A. Key Research Findings

*What do African-American seniors understand about health care?*⁸

- Most African-American seniors (81 percent) have inadequate health literacy – 42 percent cannot understand medication instructions, such as “take on an empty stomach.”
- Twenty-six percent do not understand the information on an appointment slip.
- Patients with low health literacy are 52 percent more likely to be hospitalized than those with adequate health literacy.
- Of African-American patients enrolled in a Medicare HMO or considering joining one, 83 percent are unaware of the requirements for joining.

*How healthy are African-American seniors?*⁹

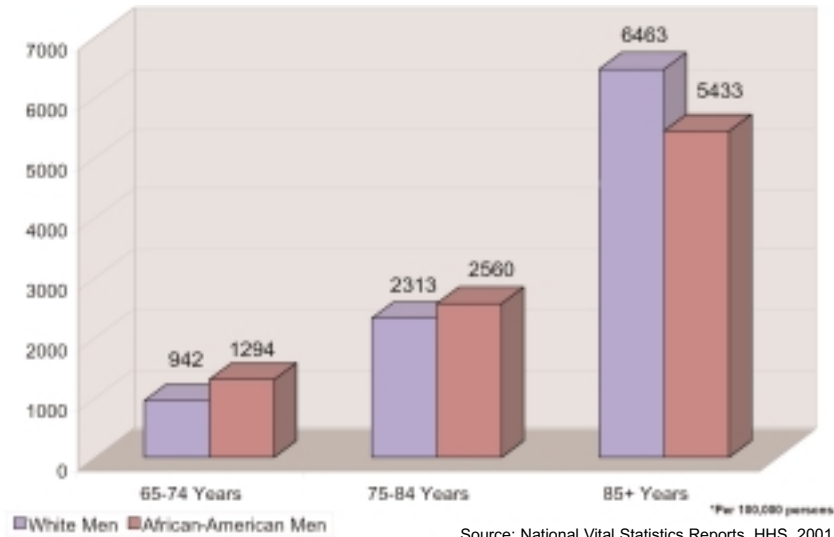
- Coronary heart disease is the most common cause of death among African Americans. For ages 65 through 84, mortality rates exceed those for whites. (See Charts 1 and 2.)
- The stroke mortality among African Americans is one and one-half to two times higher than that of white Americans.
- For adults aged 45 to 74, diabetes mortality rates are two to three times higher among African Americans compared to whites.
- Studies have found that the prostate cancer mortality rate for African-American men aged 65 and older is more than twice that of white men in the same age group.
- African Americans account for 31 percent of U.S. end stage renal disease cases.

8., 9. From reviews of the literature. Please see BIBLIOGRAPHY for selected references.

HORIZONS Project

CHART 1

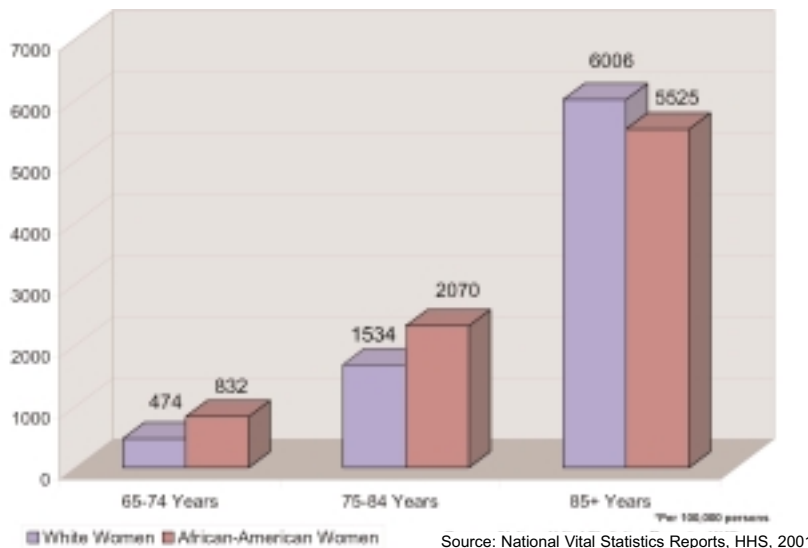
Coronary Heart Disease Rates* for Males
By Age and Race, 1999



HORIZONS Project

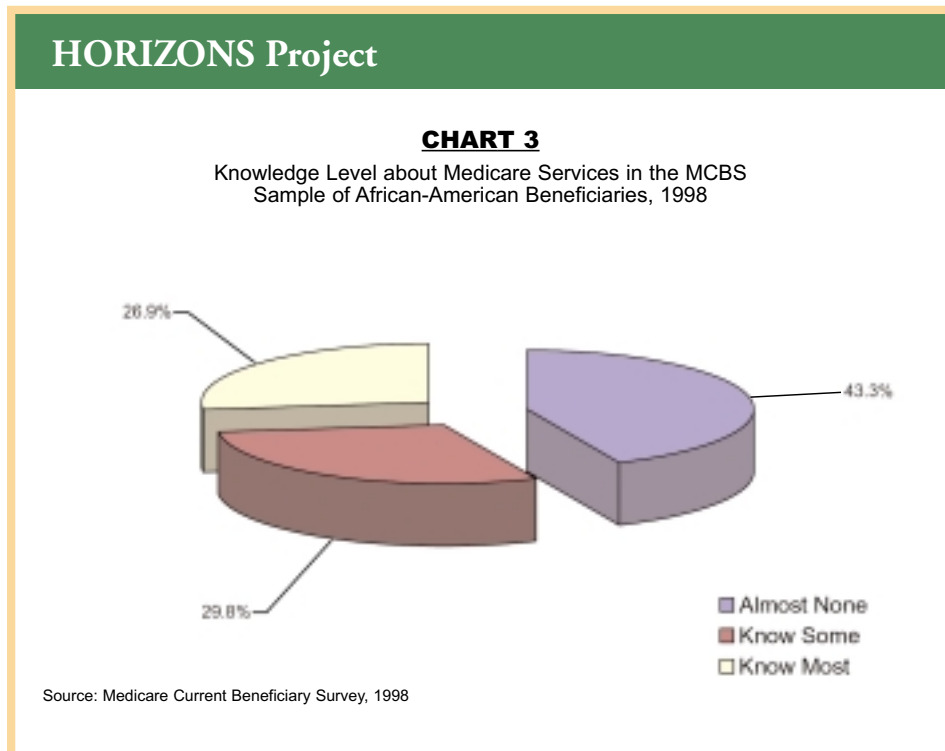
CHART 2

Coronary Heart Disease Rates* for Females
By Age and Race, 1999



*What do African-American beneficiaries know about Medicare?*¹⁰

- They need general information on what services Medicare covers. (See Chart 3.)
- As a rule, they do not understand the relationship between Medicare and HMOs, nor do they understand the benefits of Medicare + Choice. (See Chart 4.)
- They want to know why Medicare does not cover some prescriptions and to understand the differences between brand-name and generic medications.
- Seventy-three percent indicate a low level of use of Medicare information services.

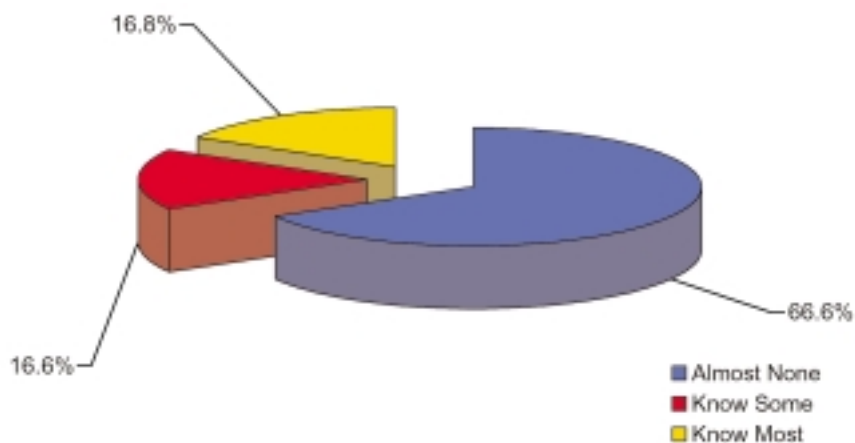


10. From 1998 Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey data on African-American Medicare beneficiaries.

HORIZONS Project

CHART 4

Knowledge Level about Medicare Managed Care Plans in the MCBS Sample of African-American Beneficiaries, 1998



How do African-American beneficiaries prefer to receive healthcare information?¹¹

- They prefer to obtain their Medicare information from a trusted, knowledgeable person, such as a doctor, a Medicare representative, or a healthcare provider.
- Many prefer a Medicare spokesperson to be “older,” in the 50-plus age range.
- They would like to see a Medicare spokesperson who is knowledgeable about Medicare and who can explain Medicare services in easily understood language.
- Currently, printed materials are the most common form for distributing Medicare information to African-American beneficiaries.
- When seeking Medicare information, these beneficiaries are most likely to use the *Medicare & You* handbook and the 1-800-MEDICARE telephone number. However, many find the toll-free phone number frustrating and confusing because of the automated menu.
- Internet use to learn Medicare information is almost nonexistent.
- Almost none have heard of the SHIP office, but most are interested in learning more about the office and would like to use it.
- Most receive some Medicare information through the media, with their preference being television. They definitely would watch a video that contained Medicare

11. From focus groups conducted in nine cities – Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, New Iberia, New Orleans, New York City, Oakland, Savannah, and Washington DC – to assess Medicare information needs and product preferences of African-American beneficiaries.

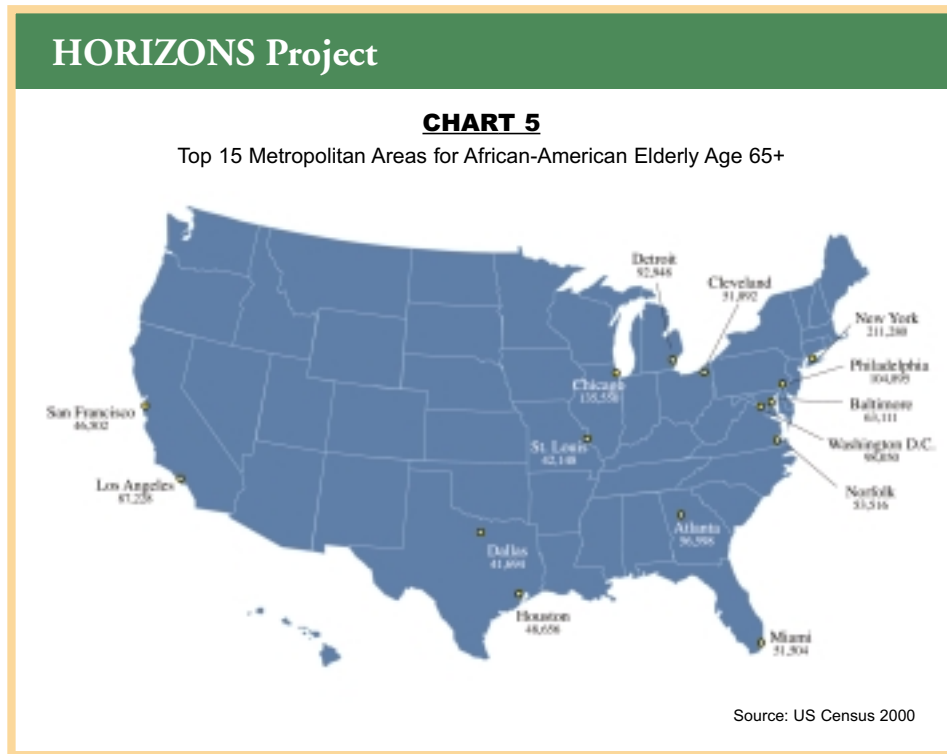
information, and would prefer to watch it either at home or in a group at a senior center. They watch television mostly in the late afternoons and evenings, and they are watching the news, gospel programs, court television, and game shows.

- They read AARP magazines, such as *Modern Maturity*, and Christian magazines, such as *The Daily Bread*. Some read *Ebony* and *Jet*. They are likely to read the health sections first.
- They seem to read the local newspaper and are likely to read the front page and the obituary sections first.
- They would like to see the following topics discussed in advertisements and commercials: coverage for prescription medications, changes in the Medicare program, Medicare billing, increases in benefits, and new medical breakthroughs.
- When asked what would catch their attention in an advertisement, they said that the word “Medicare” is enough to catch their attention.
- They find the information in Medicare printed materials is not always easy to understand, but is useful and accurate.
- They prefer printed materials that have large print, are current and to the point, use simple words, have pictures, are colorful (red, white, and blue, specifically), and are printed on paper that is flat, thin, and smooth.
- They would prefer to receive printed materials in the form of a newsletter that comes to the house regularly.
- They believe that radio is a good way to educate people about preventive care services and that a radio commercial would motivate them to use the services.

B. Demographic Data Highlights

- Census 2000 data show the total population of African Americans aged 65 and older at 2,822,950. Of those, 62 percent are women, 38 percent are men; 57 percent are age 65 to 74; and 43 percent are 75 or older.
- The average reading level of African-American seniors is fifth grade. Eighty-one percent have a high school diploma or less education, and 19 percent are educated beyond high school.
- Where do they live? Ten states account for 57 percent of the African-American elderly population in the United States. Five are in the South. New York (261,554); California (181,983); Texas (176,106); Florida (172,212); North Carolina (153,298); Georgia (152,980); Illinois (152,445); Ohio (122,975); Virginia (122,392); and Michigan (120,269).
- Fifteen metropolitan areas account for 42 percent of the African-American elderly population: New York City (211,280); Chicago (135,550); Philadelphia (104,895); Washington, DC (98,050); Detroit (92,948); Los Angeles (87,228); Baltimore (63,111); Atlanta (56,598); Norfolk (53,516); Cleveland (51,892);

Miami (51,504); Houston (48,656); San Francisco (46,502); St. Louis (42,148); and Dallas (41,694). Together, these top 15 metropolitan areas account for 1,185,572 African Americans aged 65 and older, 42 percent of the total African-American population 65 years of age and older in the United States. (See Chart 5.)

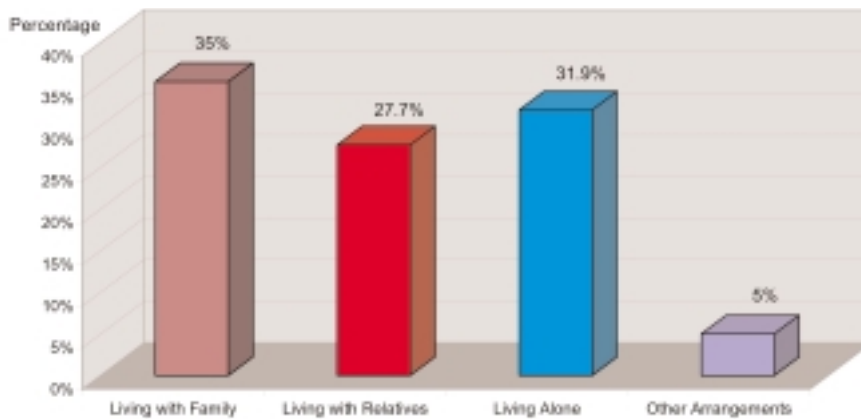


What kinds of living arrangements do they have?

- A majority, 63 percent, live in immediate or extended family households, 5 percent live in non-family households, and 32 percent live alone. (See Chart 6.) Thirty-seven percent are married, and 41 percent are widowed.

CHART 6

Living Arrangements of African-American Elderly Age 65+



Source: US Census, CPS, 2000

How do their lives compare with mainstream Americans' lives?

- Compared with other racial and ethnic groups aged 65-74 and 75-84, death rates are the highest among African Americans. At birth, African-American men are expected to live to 67 years; white men are expected to live to age 74. At birth, African-American women are expected to live to age 74, while white women are expected to live almost to 80. By age 65, life expectancy of African-American men and women is about 2 years less than that of white men and women.

C. List of Key Organizations*

National Organizations

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
5656 South Stony Island Avenue
Chicago, IL 60637
(773) 684-1282
www.aka1908.org

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
2313 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
(410) 554-0040
www.alphaphialpha.net

Alzheimers' Association
225 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 1700
Chicago, IL 60601
(800) 272-3900
(312) 335-8700
(312) 335-1110 (fax)
www.alz.org

American Diabetes Association
1701 N. Beauregard Street
Alexandria, VA 22311
(800) 342-2383
www.diabetes.org

American Society on Aging
Network of Multicultural Aging
833 Market Street, Suite 511
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 974-9630
www.asaging.org
ctursi@asa.asaging.org

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
1707 New Hampshire Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 986-2400
www.deltasigmatheta.org

Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.
2322-24 N. Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19132
(215) 228-7184
www.kappaalphapsi.com

National Black Association for Speech,
Language, and Hearing
P.O. Box 959
Athens, OH 45701
(740) 594-4989
www.nbaslh.org

National Black Nurses Association
8630 Fenton Street, Suite 330
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 589-3200
www.nbna.org

National Black Women's Health Project
600 Pennsylvania Ave., SE
Suite 310
Washington, DC 20003
(202) 543-9311
www.nbwhp.org

National Caucus and Center on Black Aged
1220 L Street, NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 637-8400
www.ncba-blackaged.org

National Medical Association
1012 10th Street
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 347-1895
www.nmanet.org

* Accurate as of April 2003

National Urban League
120 Wall Street, 8th Floor
New York, NY 10005
(212) 558-5300
www.nul.org

Office of Minority Health Resources Center
P.O. Box 37337
Washington, DC 20013
(800) 444-6472
www.ombrc.gov

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.
3951 Snapfinger Parkway
Decatur, GA 30035
(404) 284-5533
www.omegapsiphifraternity.org

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.
145 Kennedy Street, NW
Washington, DC 20011
(202) 726-5434
www.pbs1914.org

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.
1734 New Hampshire Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 387-3103
www.zphib1920.org

State and Local Organizations

CALIFORNIA

Bay Area Health Ministries
70 West Clay Street
San Francisco, CA 94121

Catholic Charities of the East Bay
433 Jefferson Street
Oakland, CA 94607
(510) 768-3122
www.cceb.org

Center for Aging in Diverse Communities
University of CA, San Francisco
P.O. Box 0856
San Francisco, CA 94143
(415) 476-9933
www.medicine.ucsf.edu/cadc

Habitat for Humanity International
Ten Parish Project
2619 Broadway, Suite 206
Oakland, CA 94612-3107
(510) 251-6304
(510) 251-6309 (fax)
www.habitat.org

North Oakland Senior Center
5714 Martin Luther King Jr. Way
Oakland, CA 94609
(510) 597-5085
www.oaklandnet.com/parks/facilities/senior_north.asp

West Oakland Senior Center
1724 Adeline Street
Oakland, CA 94607
(510) 238-7016
www.oaklandnet.com/parks/facilities/senior_west.asp

FLORIDA

Institute on Aging
University of Florida
1329 SW 16th Street
Room 5130
P.O. Box 103505
Gainesville, FL 32610
(352) 265-8036
www.aging.ufl.edu
aging-L@lists.ufl.edu

Institute on Aging/University of
South Florida
13201 Bruce B. Downs Blvd, MDC-56
Tampa, FL 33612
(813) 974-9808
www.hsc.usf.edu/ioa

GEORGIA

Harriet G. Darnell Senior Multipurpose
Facility
677 Fairburn Rd., NW
Atlanta, GA 30331
(404) 699-8580

Liberty City Golden Age Center
1401 Mills B. Lane Boulevard
Savannah, GA 31405
(912) 652-3804

New Calvary Missionary Baptist Church
823 Dill Avenue, SW
Atlanta, GA 30310
(404) 758-2727
www.newcalvarymbc.org

The Q.L.S. Villas
4020 Danford Rd. SW
Atlanta, GA 30311
(404) 699-7710

Woodville Golden Age Center
127 Darling Street
Savannah, GA 31408
(912) 965-2373

ILLINOIS

Center for Research on Health and Aging
University of Illinois at Chicago
Chicago, IL 60612
(312) 996-7222

Center on Demographics and Economics
of Aging
University of Chicago
1155 East 60th Street
Chicago, IL 60637
(773) 256-6302
www.spc.uchicago.edu/coa

Central West Senior Center
2102 West Ogden Ave.
Chicago, IL 60612
(312) 746-5300
www.ci.chi.il.us/Aging/SeniorCenters/Centralwest.html

Chicago Department of Aging
30 North LaSalle, Suite 2320
Chicago, IL 60602
(312) 744-5770
www.ci.chi.il.us/Aging/

LOUISIANA

Central City Senior Center
2020 Jackson Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70113
(504) 524-9876

Gordon Plaza Senior Center
2808 Higgins Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70117
(504) 944-0397

New Orleans Towers
3601 Texas Drive
New Orleans, LA 70112
(504) 362-3002

Union Bethel A.M.E Church
2321 Thalia Street
New Orleans, LA
(504) 525-5317

MARYLAND

University of Maryland Center for Research
on Aging
660 W. Redwood Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
(410) 706-4567
www.gerontology.umaryland.edu/umcra.html

MICHIGAN

Geriatrics and Aging Resource Consortium
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
(734) 763-4786
www.med.umich.edu/geriatrics_center/research/aging.htm

Michigan Center for Urban African
American Aging Research
Wayne State University and University
of Michigan
(734) 763-2491
[http://mcuaaar.iog.wayne.edu/
www.jamess@umich.edu](http://mcuaaar.iog.wayne.edu/www.jamess@umich.edu)

Resource Center for African American
Aging Research
Henry Ford Health System
(800) 653-6568

NEW YORK

Columbia Center for Active Life
Minority Elders
622 W. 168th Street, VC2-205
New York, NY 10032
(212) 305-6262
<http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/calme/>

East Harlem Committee on Aging,
Inc./Project Life
312 East 109th Street
New York, NY 10029
(212) 427 0915

Handicapped Adults
177 Dreiser Loop
Bronx, NY 10476
(718) 320-2069

National Caucus and Center on Black Aged
c/o Brookdale Center on Aging
1114 Avenue of the Americas, 40th Floor
New York, NY 10036
(646) 366-1000
(212) 481-5069 (fax)
www.brookdale.org

Queens Independent Living Center
140-40 Queens Blvd.
Jamaica, NY 11435
(718) 658-2526
www.nycilc.org/qilc.htm

NORTH CAROLINA

Center on Minority Aging/The University
of North Carolina, Campus
Box 1030
720 Airport Road, Suite 100
Chapel Hill, NC 27599
(919) 966-9444
www.unc.edu/depts/cmaweb/

PENNSYLVANIA

Institute on Aging
University of Pennsylvania
3615 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104
(215) 898-3163
www.uphs.upenn.edu/aging

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging
642 N. Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19130
(215) 765-9000
www.pcaphl.org

Deleware County for the Aging
P.O. Box 2048
Upper Darby, PA 19082
(610) 713-2100
www.cemainfo.net

TEXAS

Minority Aging Research
Institute/University of North Texas
P.O. Box 310919
Denton, TX 76203
(940) 565-2765

Texas Department on Aging
P.O. Box 12786
Austin, TX 78711
(512) 424-6840
www.tdoa.state.tx.us

WASHINGTON, DC

DC Independent Living Center
1400 Florida Ave. NE, Suite 3A
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 388-0033

Friendship Terrace
4201 Butterworth Place, N.W.
Washington, DC 20016
(202) 244-7400

Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery
Service
2451 Good Hope Rd. Southeast
Washington, DC 20020
(202) 678-2800

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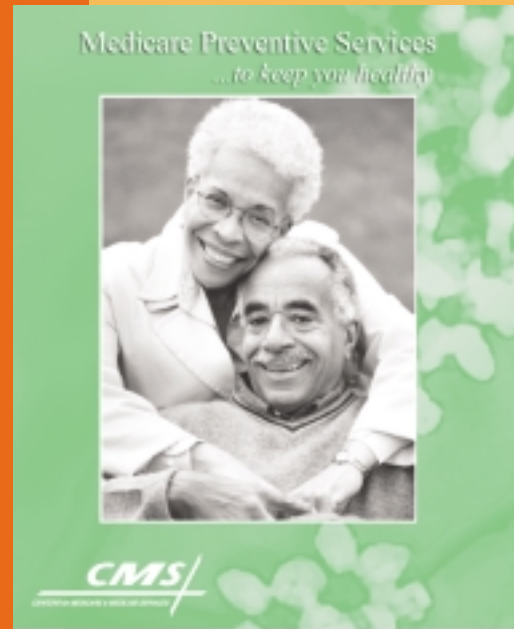


HORIZONS PROTOTYPES

Print

MEDICARE PREVENTIVE SERVICES BROCHURE

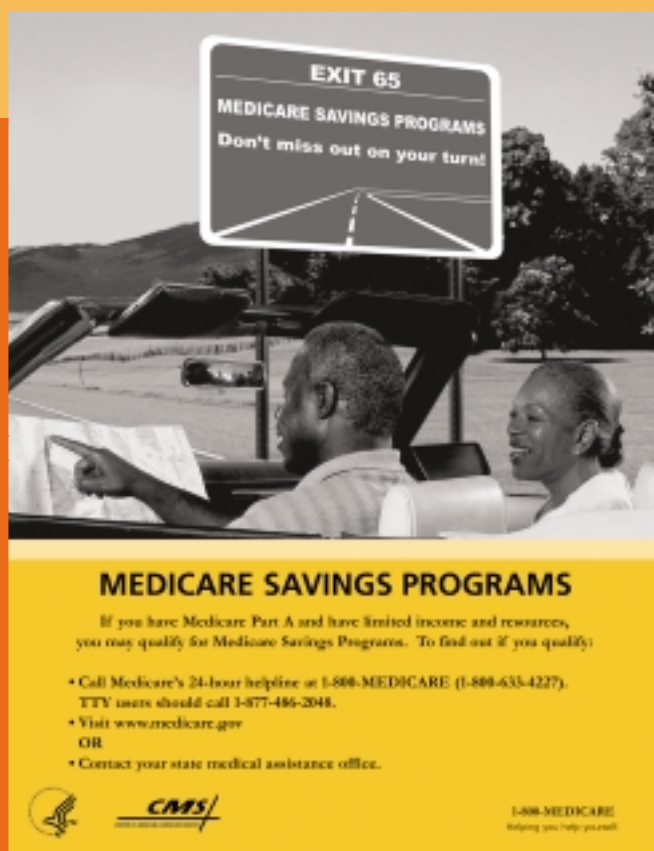
This brochure provides detailed information about the preventive services that are covered by Medicare. The brochure's introductory page highlights a few of the health disparities experienced by African-American elderly and the corresponding Medicare preventive services that can improve health outcomes. The publication is clearly written from approved mainstream Medicare text using a basic Q&A format. It describes available tests and their respective costs. It advises readers to seek their doctor's advice.



MEDICARE PREVENTIVE SERVICES FAN

This collateral material is printed with information on the important Medicare Preventive Services available to beneficiaries and the 1-800-MEDICARE toll-free phone number. As with the other products that promote preventive services, the fan depicts the CMS tagline, "Helping you help yourself."

print cont.



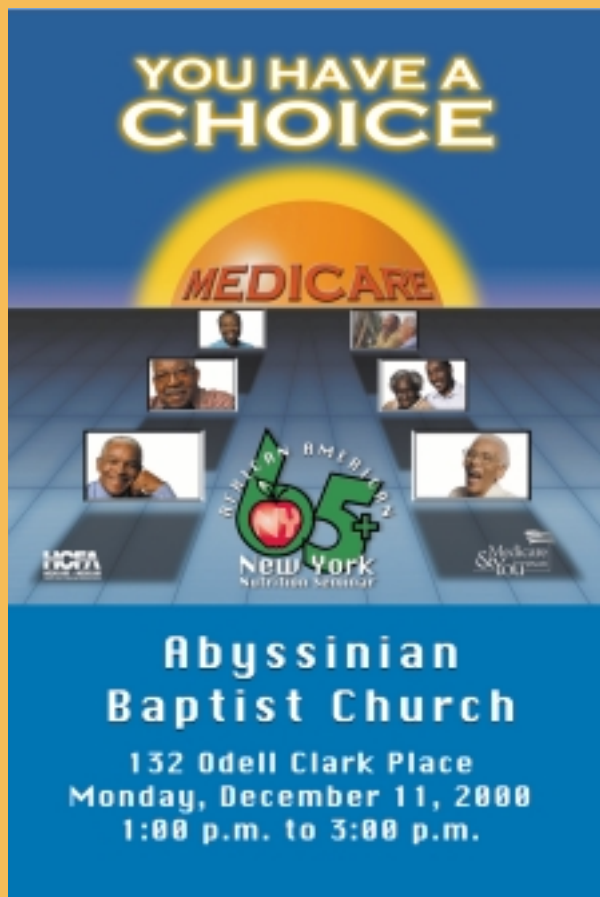
MEDICARE SAVINGS PROGRAMS FACT SHEET AND POSTER

This four-page fact sheet and accompanying poster provide information about the Medicare Savings Programs and feature the same couple from the related video. The information in the fact sheet is presented in a Q&A format and gives facts about qualifying for the programs as well as where to call for additional information. The poster features the couple in their car looking at a road sign that reads: "Exit 65, Medicare Savings Programs, Don't miss out on your turn!" The poster encourages people to call to find out if they qualify for the programs.



GLAUCOMA POSTER

The poster features a birthday card to grandma and grandpa with a baby's image seen through a magnifying glass. It promotes the glaucoma screening services offered through Medicare. The slogan reads: "Call 1-800-MEDICARE. You should see what you are missing!"



NEW YORK

MEDICARE+CHOICE POSTER

This poster, featuring the slogan "You Have a Choice," was showcased at outreach seminars sponsored by community-based partner organizations during a New York pilot.



TV and Radio PSAs

MEDICARE SAVINGS PROGRAMS PSA

The viewer sees a married couple aging as they drive in their car. They pass by road signs with information about saving for a college fund, buying a new home, and purchasing life insurance.

The final sign, Exit 65, promotes the Medicare Savings Programs. The wife asks her husband to go back so they can get the information.



TV AND RADIO ADS ON PREVENTIVE SERVICES

This 60-second TV PSA and 60-second radio ad promote the preventive services available to Medicare beneficiaries.

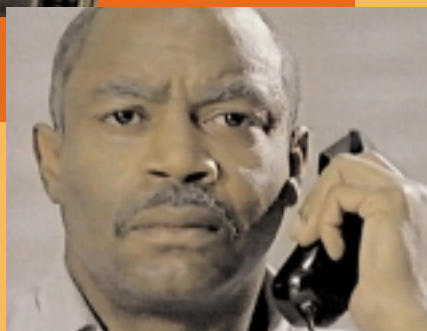
The concept for both of the ads is a conversation between a grandmother and grandson as they walk home from the grandson's school. They talk about what it means to be retired. The grandmother explains that she plans to live a long, healthy life with the help of Medicare Preventive Services.



RADIO AD ON GLAUCOMA

This 60-second radio ad promotes the advantages of early detection and treatment for glaucoma. It features a grandmother and mother talking about and looking at pictures of the grandbaby. The grandmother is having trouble seeing the pictures. The mother explains that Medicare covers annual glaucoma screenings; she encourages the grandmother to make an appointment.

PSAs cont.



RADIO PSA ON DIABETES

This 60-second radio ad focuses on how Medicare can help beneficiaries manage diabetes. The ad features church choir members having a conversation about another member who is unable to participate due to complications from diabetes. They discuss how Medicare Preventive Services can help people manage diabetes and live healthier lives.

TV PSA ON HEART DISEASE

This 30-second TV PSA informs beneficiaries about how Medicare can help beneficiaries try to reduce their risk of heart disease. This ad depicts the premature death of someone due to heart disease. A voiceover explains that heart disease is the leading cause of death among African-American seniors and that Medicare can help with this serious health risk.

Educational Video

MEDICARE SAVINGS PROGRAMS VIDEO

This 5-minute educational video depicts an African-American husband and wife discussing their pending retirement and their life's journey together. The wife tells her husband that her friend told her about savings programs available through Medicare. When the couple arrives at the home of their friends, they talk about the Medicare Savings Programs, and the husband and wife decide to call to find out if they qualify.



Outdoor Media

NEW ORLEANS PILOT TRANSIT ADS

Advertisements during a HORIZONS pilot included transit ads. Transit ads were placed in the interiors and exteriors of 15 city buses that traveled through areas of New Orleans with high numbers of African-American residents.



Newspaper/ Magazine Ads

NEWSPAPER AD PROMOTING THE NEW ORLEANS MEDICARE+CHOICE HEALTH FAIR
HORIZONS has also placed ads in the food section of selected newspapers. Seniors often peruse this section to obtain coupons or to learn about savings on food prices.



Outreach



MEDICARE+CHOICE PILOT BOOTH

During the pilots in New Orleans and New York (fall of 2000), HORIZONS developed a direct beneficiary outreach strategy referred to as "Have Booth Will Travel." This promotional display booth was set up in shopping malls, public housing facilities, local health clinics, senior centers, and churches.



“How To” Tip Sheets

Developing and Disseminating Products
for the African-American Population

The following pages provide step-by-step instructions for developing products and planning events for outreach to the African-American Medicare beneficiary population. We still have much to learn about this growing beneficiary population group, and consider this information “under construction” (). Information marked with a () is specific to the African-American population. Additional tips provided can be used with all populations.

Transcreated Materials for the African-American Medicare Population

1. Ask yourself:

- Does the information I want to relay already exist?
- Can I adapt existing information to reach the target audience, or should I start from scratch?
- What is the literacy level of my audience?
- Do I understand the target audience – who they are, where they live, and the culture and other factors that influence their behavior.

2. Transcreating

- Understanding the target audience is the first step in designing effective transcreated communication products.
- A good “transcreation” (a product that is culture- and language-appropriate) uses nuances, concepts, and phrases familiar to the target audience.



African Americans prefer images that convey positive messages and portray African-American seniors who are alert, thoughtful, and recognizable as the “everyday man or woman.”



Elderly African Americans also prefer realistic images and content that speak directly to their life circumstances.



African-American elders are more likely than many elderly population groups to have low literacy levels.

3. Dissemination



Find key organizations in targeted communities to display and distribute the product, e.g., churches, sororities, fraternities, Masonic lodges, and historically black colleges and universities.



Call community partners and tell them about the new product; most will be happy to help disseminate it. Target doctors' offices, pharmacies, senior centers, churches, and grocery stores – places frequented by African-American seniors.

- Post/promote the product on your web site, and make sure government partners (federal, state, and local) are aware of it.
- Make sure everyone in your organization who can use this product knows that it exists.

4. Evaluating the communication effort

- When planning your communication effort, include an assessment of what worked, what did not work, and why.
- Some effective assessment tools:
 - Share your plans with community partners and stakeholders, and solicit their input.
 - Conduct face-to-face interviews or focus testing with your audience to obtain feedback.
 - Ask community-based organizations if people are using services more often or more effectively as a result of your effort.
 - Use built-in evaluations, such as coupons.
 - Keep a book of news clippings for future reference.

Outdoor & Alternative Media for the African-American Medicare Population

1. Ask yourself:

- What format of outdoor or alternative media will best reach the target audience?
- What formats are available in the areas I want to target?
- Do I know the habits of the target audience – for example, are they driving or using public transportation? Ask your target audience, partners, and community-based organizations who assist them. Ask media outlets, review demographic information, and obtain data from public transportation companies.

2. Making the right choice

- Outdoor ads, such as public transit advertising and billboards, get great exposure and build image and credibility.
- Ask transit companies what options are available for advertising.
- Remember, billboards stay in one place; your message will reach the audience traveling by your billboard every day.
- Alternative media include subway, train, and bus advertising; sandwich boards (outdoor signage printed front and back); and other places where the message might attract attention.

3. Designing outdoor & alternative media

- Keep it short – six words or fewer.
- Keep the concept simple. For example, say: “Call 1-800-MEDICARE for your Medicare questions.”
- Be sure print is large, clear, and easy to read.
- Feature one large graphic to attract attention.
- Make sure the billboard is illuminated.
- Choose a high-traffic area used by the target audience.



Test the design and text to ensure effectiveness with the African-American audience.

4. Producing & placing the media

- Call the billboard, bus, subway, or train companies in the target area and ask what locations/routes are available.

- Identify media companies.
- Determine costs, including how long the ad will run, production, printing, and installation.
- Ask the transit company for demographic information (the age of their riders, the routes they take, and an estimate of the number of times the target audience will see the message).
- Most media companies will produce the ad if you provide the copy, photos, and concept.
- Be aware of fees, licenses, and other legal requirements.
- Plan to produce an additional quantity of the item, approximately 10 percent, to allow for possible damage and the need for periodic reposting.
- Consider placing ads on smaller posters inside transit vehicles and on kiosks located in stations and depots.

5. Dissemination

- Work with the media outlets to develop a map and schedule to meet your needs.
- The media company will install/place all media and provide a schedule of display times for the locations where signage is placed.





Educational Videos for the African-American Medicare Population


1. Ask yourself:

- What information needs to be relayed? Research your audience. Consider: Guidebook, community-based organizations, and other sources.
- How much time will it take to convey the message? (Research has shown the audience loses interest after 7 minutes.)
- How should the message be delivered? Copy (script), bullet points, and a narrator might be all that is needed. Professional talent might be more effective in telling a story.

2. Write the script

- Gather the information needed to write the script.
- Write, edit, and keep the language/dialogue simple.
-  Elderly African Americans prefer realistic images and content that speak directly to their life circumstances.
-  Make sure that African-American men as well as women are included in public education campaigns.
- If using just copy and a narrator, jazz it up with animation, color, icons, and music.
- Allow for transitions from scene to scene.
- Ensure the dialogue is synchronized to the action on the screen.

3. Pre-production is a must

- A video is a long production; careful preparation is a must!
- Hire a production company to take care of the details. They will have the requisite expertise and insurance for the filming/shooting. With your input they can take care of the following:
 -  Identify culturally-appropriate talent and negotiate buy-outs/licensing agreements. This population prefers images that convey positive messages and portray African-American seniors who are alert, thoughtful, and recognizable as the “everyday man or woman.”
 - Identify locations for shooting/filming and obtain any necessary licenses and permission.
 - Hire the crew including lighting technicians, sound technicians, wardrobe, and make-up.

- Schedule production and provide maps, directions, etc.
- Buy props.
- Provide snacks and meals.


4. Production

- Leave extra/enough time and prepare for the unexpected. Talent may take a while to get their lines just right, or a piece of equipment might break down.
- If you decide to stick with copy and narration, all production will take place in an editing studio. Sit side-by-side with the editor and tell him/her the concept – together, you can build the video on the studio’s monitor, and narration can be dropped in.

5. The editing process

- Use a professional editor – production studios will provide someone who can carefully cut away to scenes, insert dialogue where needed, and make sure everything is timed just right.
- Make sure you have all the logos and artwork the editor may need.
- There may be a better way to say something, and you may need to work with the editor on ways to insert new dialogue without losing or adding time to your video.
- If your script is well written, and dialogue and scenes transition smoothly, editing should go well.

6. Dissemination

- Send your video package to local public television stations and local cable access stations, and ask them to fit it into their public access schedule.
- Find key culturally-appropriate organizations in targeted communities to display and distribute the product.
-  Call community partners and tell them about the new product – most will be happy to help disseminate it. Target doctors’ offices, senior and community centers, hospital waiting areas, churches, and other places frequented by African-American seniors.
- Make sure everyone in your organization who can use this product is aware of it.





Outreach Events for the African-American Medicare Population

1. Outreach events & community partners

- Community partners are essential to a successful event. They add value and credibility to your outreach effort.
- Search out community partners and key organizations that have the same goals as yours, e.g., American Cancer Society.
- Find out if together you can create an event to reach the target audience. They may have an established event in which your organization can become a partner.
- To take advantage of your common interests, work with local chapters of national organizations such as the American Heart Association or the American Diabetes Association.

2. Planning the event

- Estimate the number of attendees and make sure you have plenty of brochures and items to distribute.
- Enlist trained staff who are linguistically and culturally competent.
-  Write a press release and contact the media to write a feature story and cover the event, preferably in a local African-American newspaper.
- Remember, you are performing a function of social and economic importance – this fact will help you negotiate ad space to promote the event, or might even get you a media sponsorship.
-  Find sponsors (e.g., African-American organizations) to contribute free items and share other important health information.
- Make sure there is enough to do. People enjoy receiving free items and information. Services such as health screenings and cooking demonstrations provide an added bonus!






3. Day of the event

- Distribute the products on hand and come prepared to answer questions.
- Don't be surprised if seniors bring you medical bills and other healthcare-related information for you to look over. Be prepared to answer questions and schedule follow-up appointments.

- Use this event to gather important insight – you may want to ask everyone you greet if the products and information you are providing are helpful.
- Use each event as a learning experience and testing ground – keep a log of what worked, what did not work, and other lessons learned.

TV & Radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs) for the African-American Medicare Population

1. Keep in mind:

-  Audiovisual media products, such as television and radio public service announcements (PSAs), may resonate better than print products with the African-American audience.
-  African-American beneficiaries prefer images and content that speak directly to their life circumstances.
-  For many older African Americans, radio is a source of companionship and advice.
 - Many listeners keep the radio on all the time.
 - Radio spots during commercial breaks in popular programs reach a relatively loyal daytime audience.
 - Gospel music stations are strongly preferred.
-  Feature a trusted spokesperson from the African-American population.
 - Due to production costs, television is more expensive to produce. Yet, for this population it is the medium of choice to receive health information.
 - Radio is less expensive to produce, but is not always the most effective medium.
 - Develop programs or PSAs that air at the times that African-American seniors are watching television (see Guidebook).
-  Portray people with whom many African-American seniors identify: grocery clerks, letter carriers, religious leaders, bus drivers, pharmacy staff, doctors, and nurses.
 - A growing number of local radio stations include an “ask the doctor” type of call-in show.

2. Scriptwriting

- Answer the following questions in your script – who, what, why, where, when, and how.
- Remember, radio and television are typically in 60- and 30-second formats – keep words to a minimum!
- Write your message in clear, simple language.
- Take a break and come back later for a fresh look – you may be surprised to find that you need to edit again.
- Always incorporate a call to action and repeat it!

- Listen to commercials on the radio to get an idea of what may appeal to the target audience.



Focus test the message/concept with members of the target audience for cultural appropriateness, understandability, saliency, and overall appeal.

3. Choosing vocals & talent



Choose from local talent, spokespersons, or trusted radio and television announcers who represent the target population.

- Negotiate with the talent to get a reduced fee or services at no charge.
- If you must buy-out the talent (negotiate a contract), know where and how long the PSA is going to air so you can negotiate effectively.

4. Producing the PSA

- Research the local radio and television production studios.
- Discuss budgets with them, and be honest about what you can afford.
- No budget? Then visit the public information office (PIO) of the local radio or television stations, and ask to produce your PSA free of charge – stress the importance of the message!
- If you use a production studio to tape a radio or television PSA, make sure everything is included in the package. For television, this includes pre-production, wardrobe, make-up, lighting, a producer, music, sound technician, and editing. You will need a sound technician, producer, and music for radio.

5. Choosing music & soundbeds

- Using music as a soundbed (background music) under the vocals helps attract the audience's attention.
- Healthcare messages often are serious and call for soft, classical music, while messages such as those promoting a healthy lifestyle are enhanced by livelier tunes.
- Use music that does not overpower the vocals.
- Find royalty-free music to keep your costs down.
- If using popular music, research the need to negotiate a buy-out fee.

6. Dissemination

- Call the PIO at each station in your target market and tell them you are sending over a Medicare PSA. For radio, send a DAT (a tape for radio broadcast use) or script, and for TV, ask what format is needed (beta or 3/4 inch).

- Along with the PSA, send instructions (insertion order) to run it as often as possible, including during prime time.
- Follow-up with a phone call to the PIO to make sure he/she received the spot, and discuss the importance of the message.



Print Products for the African-American Medicare Population

1. Ask yourself:

- What information do I want to relay?
- What would work best ... a brochure, fact sheet, poster, postcard, etc.?
- How will I distribute the products?
- What is the literacy level of my audience?
- Is there existing content I can adapt for the needs/interests of the target audience?
- Are there opportunities to focus test this material with the community?
- Who needs to review/clear the material?

2. Using pictures?

- Use photos of people who look like the target audience.



Find out if your organization has photos on file that resonate with the African-American population. This population needs to see themselves as the centerpiece of the image, rather than in the background.

- Search the Internet for royalty-free photos.
- Illustrations, line drawings, and icons can be used.

3. Use color in your document



Use two colors in your document – one for background and one for contrast, e.g. red and blue work well for this audience, or

- Use black type on a cream, white, or light-colored background.
- There are times when using several colors may be necessary for a certain effect or to distinguish the document from others.
- Departure from general guidelines may be appropriate, depending on the specific situation or regional/cultural nuance.
- Test any variation with the target audience.

4. Choose a typestyle and format that are easy to read

- Use no more than two typefaces in your document. To show contrast, use one font for headlines (sans serif), and another for body copy (serif).
- Use a 14-point type size.

- Check formatting such as spacing and margins for consistency.
- Don't fully justify copy, as it's easier to read text that is left-aligned and ragged-right.

5. Use short, simple sentences

- Follow newspaper writing rules – answer who, what, why, when, where, and how.
- Keep in mind the education level of your audience – use simple words and definitions.



6. Create a mock-up

- Draw a mock-up in color.
- Write headlines; indicate where photos should be placed, and how copy should be laid out.
- Fold your mock-up to indicate panels for a brochure, or give dimensions for a poster or postcard.

7. Printing the product

- Provide camera-ready or electronic artwork for the printer.
- Make sure the printer is supplied with all the photos, illustrations, and copy needed to do the job – most printers will gladly make the artwork electronic, you just need to ask!

8. Dissemination

-  Find key locations in targeted communities to display and distribute the product, e.g., churches, civic organizations, service organizations, and historically black colleges and universities.
-  Call community partners and tell them about the new product – most will be happy to help disseminate it. Target doctors' offices, pharmacies, senior centers, churches, grocery stores, and other places frequented by African-American seniors.
- Make sure everyone in your organization who can use this product is aware of it.

